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11 Luxury Travel Trends for 2011

With the start of 2011, these trends identify what influences people's choices of where and how to travel.

Luxury Travel Magazine and New York City public relations firm, Abelow PR (abelowpr.com), who counts among their luxury travel brand clients: Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Singapore Airlines, Trump International Hotel and Tower, Virgin Atlantic, Necker Island, and Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts, among many others, reveal their TOP 11 LUXURY TRAVEL TRENDS FOR 2011:

1. **Luxury Resorts in Far Flung Places** - New exclusive luxury hotels in off-the-beaten-path destinations such as Hangzhou and Tibet, China; Damascus, Syria; Trancoso, Brazil; Beirut, Lebanon; Luang Prabang, Laos; Montenegro, Colombia, Panama...now allow travelers to escape to the exotic while still enjoying luxurious accommodations and fine food.
2. **The Urge to Splurge** - After a couple of tough years, the Mendelsohn Affluent Study confirms that spending on travel is up again, especially in the luxury market. According to the motto 'carpe diem' (seize the day), travelers are looking for authentic experiences that are life-changing, while enjoying the luxury of high-end accommodation, great dining and exceptional journeys that go beyond the ordinary.
3. **Myanmar (Burma) is Wide Open for Tourism Now** - With the release from house arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, more travelers are seeking to visit this magical place. Frozen in time, Burma remains the last country in Southeast Asia that is almost entirely untouched and is also one of the most devoutly Buddhist countries left on earth.
4. **Sri Lanka is hot** - Arrivals to the country have increased 36%, and priceless cultural treasures, World Heritage sites, fabulous off-shore islands and superb cuisine await intrepid travelers keen on seeing what has been called one of the most beautiful islands in the world.
5. **Book Lover Trips** - With book groups all the rage, Asia Transpacific Journeys has organized trips based on books such as *A Beyond the Sky and Earth* based in Bhutan.
6. **Vow Renewals on the Upswing** - This old favorite is returning as the baby boomers approach milestone anniversaries with many wanting to renew their vows in unique locales. An example is a Jewish couple that renewed their vows at a Hindu temple in India.
7. **Sabbaticals To Make a Difference** - Sabbaticals are an increasingly popular way to re-prioritize and help others, like helping at a literacy program in Laos or a soup kitchen in Delhi.
8. **Authentic Travel Experiences** - Festivals and holidays provide authentic and eye-opening ways of experiencing a culture, which is exactly what today's travelers are after. Abelow PR's top choices include a local summer festival in the northern Himalaya, and the Tumbuna Sing-Sing in Papua New Guinea.
9. **Brazil: Why Wait?** - With the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics around the corner, Brazil is on the cusp of exploding, so travelers should get in before the crowds heat up. Beyond famous and beautiful Rio de Janeiro and Amazon River cruises, other exotic experiences await such as the thundering Iguazu Falls, Afro-Brazilian culinary courses and samba lessons, the jet set hot spot of Florianopolis, and stunning new boutique properties on remote beaches such as Trancoso, Bahia are awaiting travelers.



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10. Closer to Home - "Utah is the hottest new luxury destination in the U.S. with the recent openings of many high-end hotel brands," says Christine Gray, Editor-in-Chief of Luxury Travel Magazine: Amanresorts' Amangiri near Lake Powell (pictured above), The St. Regis Deer Valley, Montage Deer Valley, and the Waldorf Astoria Park City.

11. New Amanresorts - "One of the most interesting themes in Luxury Travel is speculating about where the new Amanresorts and GHM Hotels are being developed," says Christine Gray, Editor-in-Chief of Luxury Travel Magazine. "These trendsetting luxury brands are indicators of where future luxury resort development will occur. For example, Porto Heli, Greece (an area compared to the Hamptons in New York) will be a hot spot in 2011/2012 with the opening of both an Amanresort and a GHM managed hotel."

Luxury Travel Magazine has uncovered more of these "top secret" destinations that include: Amanresorts in Portugal's Douro Valley wine region, on the island of Nevis in the Caribbean, Playa Grande in the Dominican Republic, Paraty Brazil, Cavtat Croatia, Pulau Besar in Malaysia, and Shanghai, China. GHM Hotel development includes: The Nizuc, Riviera Maya, Mexico; The Malkai, Barka, Oman; The Chedi, Kilada Hills, Greece; The Chedi, Thracian Cliffs, Cape Kaliakra, Bulgaria; The Chedi, Andermatt, Switzerland; and The Chedi, Taiping Lake, Anhui Province, China.

Photo: Amanresorts' Amangiri in Utah

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